

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 22, 2004

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2003–04 REGULAR SESSION

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 239**

**Introduced by Assembly ~~Member Runner~~ Members *Runner,*  
*Maze, and McCarthy***  
*(Principal coauthor: Senator Ashburn)*

May 26, 2004

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 239—Relative to the William J. “Pete” Knight Aerospace Highway.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 239, as amended, Runner. William J. “Pete” Knight Aerospace Highway.

This measure would designate a specified segment of State Highway Route 14 as the William J. “Pete” Knight Aerospace Highway. The measure would request the Department of Transportation to determine the cost of appropriate plaques and markers for this designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering that cost, to erect those plaques and markers.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, William J. “Pete” Knight, a fighter pilot, test
- 2 pilot, astronaut, and legislator, still holds the world’s speed record
- 3 ~~for winged powerful flight~~ *fixed wing aircraft*; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Born in Noblesville, Indiana in 1929, Knight
- 5 earned his commission and pilot wings through the aviation cadet
- 6 program in 1953. As a second lieutenant, Knight won the Allison
- 7 Trophy for his racing performance while flying the F-89 Scorpion

1 in the Dayton National Air Show of 1954. In 1956, he attended the  
2 Air Force Institute of Technology and graduated two years later  
3 with a degree in aeronautical engineering. He continued his  
4 schooling by next attending the Air Force experimental test pilot  
5 training at Edwards Air Force Base, California; and

6 WHEREAS, Remaining at Edwards Air Force Base, Knight  
7 was involved in several flight test programs, including advanced  
8 testing of the F-100 Super Sabre. In 1960, he was one of five Air  
9 Force test pilots selected for the X-20 Dyna Soar Program, the  
10 technologies test project that led to the space shuttle development;  
11 and

12 WHEREAS, After cancellation of the X-20 Dyna Soar  
13 Program, Knight moved to the ongoing X-15 test program. In  
14 October 1967, he piloted the X-15A-2 to the speed of Mach 6.7.  
15 During this flight, the aircraft surface temperature exceeded 3,000  
16 degrees Fahrenheit, resulting in serious structural problems.  
17 Despite these problems, he successfully maneuvered the X-15 to  
18 a flawless landing; and

19 WHEREAS, Knight next saw combat in Southeast Asia, flying  
20 F-100s at Phan Rang Air Base where he flew 253 combat missions.  
21 After his Vietnam tour, he was assigned to Wright-Patterson Air  
22 Force Base, Ohio, where he served as test director for evaluation  
23 and testing of the F-15 Eagle; and

24 WHEREAS, Following graduation from the Industrial College  
25 of the Armed Forces in 1973, Knight returned to Wright-Patterson  
26 Air Force Base as the F-4 System Program Office (SPO) Director.  
27 As a result of reorganization within the aeronautical systems  
28 division, he became the Director of the Fighter Attach SPO  
29 responsible for the development and production of several Air  
30 Force fighter aircraft. In 1979, he returned to Edwards Air Force  
31 Base as the Air Force Flight Center Vice-Commander where he  
32 served until retirement in 1982; and

33 WHEREAS, During his distinguished career, Knight  
34 accumulated more than 7,000 flying hours in over 100 different  
35 military and civilian aircraft; and

36 WHEREAS, Not satisfied with a quiet retirement, Pete Knight  
37 was elected to the Palmdale City Council in 1984 and was the first  
38 popularly elected mayor in 1988, serving in that capacity until  
39 1992. He was then elected to the California State Assembly and  
40 served four years there. In 1996, he was elected to the California



1 State Senate, where he served as Senator for the 17th Senate  
2 District until the time of his passing; and

3 WHEREAS, During his tenure in the Senate, Pete Knight was  
4 known for his profamily, projob creation, and antitax voting  
5 record. Pete Knight was a tireless advocate for veterans and a  
6 leading voice in California’s ongoing military base retention  
7 efforts. In 2002, he was honored to have a high school named after  
8 him by the local high school district in the Antelope Valley; now,  
9 therefore, be it

10 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
11 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby designates the  
12 segment of State Highway Route 14, from the Pearblossom  
13 Highway to State Highway Route 395, as the William J. “Pete”  
14 Knight Aerospace Highway; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the Department of Transportation is requested to  
16 determine the cost of appropriate plaques and markers, consistent  
17 with the signing requirements for the state highway system,  
18 showing this special designation, and upon receiving donations  
19 from nonstate sources sufficient to cover that cost, to erect those  
20 plaques and markers; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
22 of this resolution to the Department of Transportation and to the  
23 author for appropriate distribution.

